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# Clio's Psyche

Understanding the "Why" of Culture, Current Events, History, and Society

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## Bruce Mazlish: Pioneer Psychohistorian

**Tomasz Pawelec**  
Silesian University in Katowice, Poland

*Bruce Mazlish, born in 1923 in New York City, received his doctoral degree in intellectual history from Columbia University in 1955. After teaching at the University of Maine and Columbia University, he moved to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he still teaches and where he held the Thomas Meloy Chair of Rhetoric (1986-1991). Mazlish also served as Chairman of the History Section (1965-1970) and Head of the Humanities Department (1974-1979). He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and has lectured at American and foreign universities. In 1986 he received the*

## Three Psychohistorical Perspectives on the Goldhagen Controversy

### Reflections on *Hitler's Willing Executioners*

**Eva Fogelman**  
CUNY Graduate Center

Essay Reviews of Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. 622 pages, \$30.00.

For me, Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* is not just another history book on World War II. It is partly personal since my father was sheltered from an execution that took place in his Byelorussian town of Illya. Through cracks in the planks of an attic above a bakery he

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was working in, Simcha Fogelman looked out into the town square. He saw Illya's Jews — among them his aunt, uncle, cousins, and friends — crowded into the square, stripped of their clothes, and shot. The whole exercise was completed in less than half a day. Nearly all of Illya's Jewish population — one thousand Jews — were murdered. Of the dozen or so of my family members who had lived in Illya, only my father survived.

Despite the fact that I have read hundreds of books on the destruction of European Jewry, and interviewed hundreds of Jews and non-Jews who were witness to mass murder, I painstakingly turned every page of Mr. Goldhagen's book, pages laden with sickening particulars of the executions by German Military Police Battalion 101, the torturers on the death marches, and other killers. My mind kept wondering: will I meet the murderers of my family on these pages? And of course, one cannot help but ask, How could they do it? Why did they do it? I only wish Daniel Goldhagen would have stuck to the What did they do? And to the How did they do it? Mr. Goldhagen's graphic narrative is strongest in describing the day-to-day killing operations, and highlighting the anti-Semitic incidents that were a prelude to the "Final Solution." His answer to the "Why?" question emphatically trivializes the issue. He simply explains that the murderers were *all* anti-Semites, and it is this cognitive factor alone that motivated all of them to kill the Jews.

No doubt the killers had to perceive the Jews as subhuman, as the "other," in order to treat them the way they did. The dehumanization process was part of the Nazi indoctrination program and part of the Nazi culture. To make the job of the murderers more natural and effortless, the leaders of the Third Reich understood the necessity of reducing the Jews to the level of vermin and of blaming the Jews as the cause of all their afflictions. Mr. Goldhagen reports that Germans were avid anti-Semites for many decades prior to the Third Reich. This raises many questions. Why did it take National Socialism and the rise of the Third Reich to plan the extermination of the Jews? Why were there no anti-Jewish pogroms in modern Germany prior to Hitlerism, no mass murder of Jews if there was such animosity

towards them? Was the Nazi propaganda machinery an exercise in "overkill" on the part of Hitler? Was it totally unnecessary to indoctrinate people who were already convinced? What Goldhagen misses, the Nazis understood very well: it is necessary but not sufficient to dehumanize the "other."

Mr. Goldhagen criticizes *all* previous research on the perpetrators as being ahistorical. In fact, I would suggest that ahistoricalism is precisely what afflicts Mr. Goldhagen's opus. He ignores the situational factors that ultimately were responsible for mass killings of millions of Jews — namely, governmental institutions that legalized dehumanization and mass murder of a group of people. If all it took was an anti-Semitic sentiment on the part of the people, I ask again, why didn't the destruction of European Jewry occur during a previous administration?

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After all, Goldhagen emphasizes in the first section of his book that anti-Semitism had been rampant in Germany for generations.

If we want to understand the perpetrators from a historical perspective our source is the monumental work of political scientist Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985, c. 1961) and the following questions are vital: What happened? How did it happen? And, to an extent, why did it happen? Mr. Hilberg lays out the road map to the execution. Without his pioneering venture subsequent researchers could not have done their work. There will never be an end to questions that need further inquiry about the destruction of European Jewry. Naturally, Mr. Hilberg could not complete the task. Mr. Goldhagen faults previous researchers, among them Hilberg, for not studying the Police Battalions and the executioners on the death marches. The study of the destruction of European Jewry replicates the process of the event itself: there are so many players and so much minutiae that many generations of social scientists will not complete the task of unearthing the details.

I have not studied the perpetrators, but I have studied the motivations of the non-Jewish rescuers of Jews during the Nazi era, on which I report in *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1994). From conducting psychohistorical interviews with rescuers and survivors who were helped, I traced the sequential narrative from early childhood to the first act of rescue, survival during the German occupation, and life until the present. What I have learned is that despite their heterogeneity, there is one factor that binds rescuers as a group: they saw the Jews as human beings just like themselves. This recognition is the opposite of that of the perpetrators, who did not perceive the Jews as human beings.

However, the motivation of the rescuers was diverse and complex, and sometimes straddled more than one category. Some were motivated for moral reasons — “It was the right thing to do” or “I couldn’t live with myself if I let these people die.” Even among moral rescuers there were differences. For some, morality was based on religious beliefs; for

others, on an ethical sense of right and wrong; and, for still others, on emotional rather than cognitive morality based on compassion, caring, and responsibility. These types of morality exemplify Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan’s “different voice.” Beyond moral reasons, some rescuers were initially motivated to risk their lives and those of their family members because of relationships with particular Jews or a closeness to the Jewish people. Others were fueled by anti-Nazi ideology and joined resisters who were politically opposed to the Third Reich. It was during their political activities that one action led to another, and eventually they were aiding Jews in an escape from imminent death. Social workers, doctors, nurses, diplomats, and teachers found ways to use their positions to help, while children helped at the behest of their parents. Because rescue relationships stretched into years, some that were initially started by a profit motive changed over time to an altruistic relationship and vice-versa. Despite different motivations, the rescuers’ vision of a common humanity protected them from the Nazi propaganda — treat the Jews as subhuman — and the idea and feeling of doing the right thing sustained them when fear of being caught became overwhelming.

I do not know what Mr. Goldhagen would say about the Germans who were transformed into rescuers. As for previous research on perpetrators, he dismisses the classic studies of Raul Hilberg, Christopher Browning, Henry Friedlander, Robert Jay Lifton, and others (Yehudah Bauer is not even mentioned in an end note) as suffering from “common conceptual and theoretical failings.” Mr. Goldhagen claims that genocide did not happen because people “were coerced, because they were unthinking, obedient executioners of state orders, because of social psychological pressure, because of the prospects of personal advancement, or because they did not comprehend or feel responsible for what they were doing, owing to the putative fragmentation of tasks.”

I agree with Mr. Goldhagen when he states that the killers had a choice not to kill. If they were not up to the task they could be transferred to do other work. Very few chose this path. Furthermore, the order may have been to kill, but nowhere was it mandated that the

victims should be humiliated and tortured before their execution. My explanation for this reprehensible behavior is psychological.

In the 1970s, Phil Zimbardo, a social psychologist at Stanford University, conducted a laboratory experiment of prisoners and guards. What Zimbardo found was that people assigned the role of guards became so vicious in their treatment of the prisoners that the experiment had to be stopped. There is an inexplicable psychological dynamic at work when people are playing particular roles. Similar incidents have been known to occur in real-life prisons and in political situations, such as the *Intifada*. When Israeli soldiers rampaged Palestinian homes in the middle of the night to search for dangerous terrorists they were over zealous in their house-search, and in the process sometimes harmed women and children. There is no question that orders were not given by Israeli officers to torture their captures. Why did they do it? Many soldiers were surprised and appalled at their behavior. A few felt they could not live with themselves and committed suicide.

As for the German perpetrators, we know that it is difficult to find a few who feel an iota of guilt about their treatment of Jews. This is poignantly demonstrated in psychohistorian Robert Jay Lifton's interviews in *The Nazi Doctors*, a masterpiece work on perpetrators, dismissed by Goldhagen as missing the point that they were simply anti-Semites. What is significant about Lifton's research is that he combined archival work with interviews.

Mr. Goldhagen himself laments the limitation of his source material as scanty documents from some of the men in Police Battalion 101 which they recorded twenty years after the fact. Nevertheless, he is adamant about the motivations of the perpetrators without ever having interviewed one perpetrator. And what about unconscious motivation? Does the unconscious play any role in human behavior in the extreme situation?

How can one arrive at such dogmatic conclusions about motivation as Mr. Goldhagen does without even interviewing one perpetrator when the documents are incomplete and at times unreliable? As I have learned from the rescuers, motivation of human behavior is complex and

changeable over time. We can never predict fully how one will behave in a particular situation. Are German executioners a different breed from the Ukrainians, or Latvians, or the French, or the Norwegian quislings?

Mr. Goldhagen's thesis leaves many questions unanswered. Menachem Rosensaft, author and attorney, poses some of these questions: "If Nazi propaganda and killing machinery was targeted for the Slavs, would the Germans have as enthusiastically participated in the destruction of European Jewry? Would the Jews have been spared annihilation? Why were there no mass killings of Jews, or rampant anti-Semitism in the body politic or press, in Germany after the occupying powers left in 1949?"

There is much to commend in Daniel Goldhagen's book. He lays out the antecedents to the rise of Nazism and its annihilationist anti-Semitic ideology, and he depicts the humiliation and degradation with images the reader will never forget ("into this soup they [the Germans] threw one or two cow heads with teeth, hair and eyes"). However, he undermines his own work by discrediting his predecessors from whom many of the details in the book are drawn. Mr. Goldhagen utilizes many secondary sources of previous researchers but embellishes them with empathic imagination. Serious scholars do not question Mr. Goldhagen's asserting the centrality of a demonological anti-Semitism in National Socialist ideology. But, ultimately, I must conclude, as does historian Steven Aschheim of Hebrew University, that Mr. Goldhagen misses the full historical context of the Nazis' total eugenic vision of a racial community, Raul Hilberg's description of the systematic implementation machinery that was necessary for annihilation, and the psychology of human behavior in extreme situations.

*Eva Fogelman, PhD, is a social psychologist, licensed psychologist and supervisor in private practice, author, and filmmaker. She is a Senior Research Fellow, Center for Social Research, Graduate Center of the CUNY, and Co-Director of Psychotherapy with Generations of the Holocaust and Related Groups at the Training Institute for Mental Health. Dr. Fogelman is author of the award-*

*winning Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust, writer and co-producer of Breaking the Silence: The Generation After the Holocaust, and co-editor of Children During the Nazi Reign: Psychological Perspective on the Interview Process. □*

## Reflections on Goldhagen

**George M. Kren**  
**Kansas State University**

*Editor's Note: Professor Kren will be writing a full review of Goldhagen for the American Historical Review, the official publication of the American Historical Association. Here he is providing a few comments about the book and the issues it raises.*

Daniel Goldhagen's work has engendered a major controversy. Accounts suggest that the symposium on it at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, was quite acrimonious. Numerous reviews and commentaries have been published. (I would single out Christopher R. Browning's essay in a recent issue of *History and Memory*.)

Goldhagen's concern is not with the origin of the Final Solution, or who gave the orders to engage in mass murder, or even when and how the decision to engage in mass murder was made. These issues led to a polarization between "intentionalists" and "functionalists." (For an excellent critical summary of this controversy, see Christopher R. Browning, "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism': The Decision for the Final Solution Reconsidered," *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992]). Rather, Goldhagen's focus is on the individuals who did the actual killing and on their motives.

His basic thesis is that German culture was imbued with an intense "eliminationist" anti-Semitism, and that this accounts for the fact that members of military police units had few difficulties in killing Jews. Goldhagen is convinced that all, or almost all, Germans viewed Jews as not part of the human community, and that this view is what made killing them so easy.

The evidence is now very clear that many more Germans than we had at first supposed participated in the killing. Browning's work on Police Battalion 101 had examined the attitude towards killings of a unit made up of older men who were not fanatical Nazis. Goldhagen shows how other military police units played a very active role in the killings. Clearly, the older view that held that only dedicated SS *Einsatzgruppen* participated in mass killings stands in need of revision. However, there are two propositions in Goldhagen which are untenable.

Goldhagen singles out German anti-Semitism and suggests that it was more demonic, more virulent than that prevalent in any other nation. The historical evidence in no way supports this. Austrians, who after the *Anschluss* made up eight percent of *Großdeutschland* [Greater Germany], made up forty percent of the staff of the death camps. The anti-Semitism in Poland, Romania, the Ukraine, Hungary, and even in France showed an intensity probably greater than that found in Germany. Poles killed Jews even after the war!

Above all, the argument that Germans' hatred of Jews explains the ease with which they could participate in mass killings is dubious. Germans have left behind a bloody record of killing non-Jews, from Germans who suffered mental or physical handicaps to those who deviated ideologically from the party line (members of the *Sturm-Abteilung* in 1934) to Communists as well as an untold number of Poles, Russians, and others.

Neither Goldhagen nor his critics cite psychohistorical literature. Indeed, there is almost no literature on the psychological dimension of killers who do so in the service of the state. (Although Faris R. Kirkland, "Psychological Purposes Served by War: Three Perspectives," *The Journal of Psychohistory* Volume 24 (1) Summer 1996, pages 53-63, reviews some works which deal with this from a very different perspective.) The reason for this lack of literature is, I believe, that neither psychologists nor psychiatrists view killings for the state as either psychologically or ethically problematic. In contrast, a view of human nature stemming from Rousseau and the Enlightenment has held that individuals have a strong reluctance

to kill.

However, the evidence would suggest that when authorized by a legitimate authority and supported by a peer group most individuals have no great resistance to killing. There is a remarkable scene in the film *Dead Man Walking* where a nurse, after wiping a condemned man's arm with alcohol, injects him with a lethal substance and views this as doing her job. The men of the German military police battalions had no difficulties killing non-Jews when called upon to do so. The evidence is compelling that if almost any military unit of whatever nationality is asked to kill any other group, few would have any problem participating. And the psychiatrists in all the armies would single out for therapy those few who did not participate.

*George M. Kren, PhD, is a professor of history at Kansas State University whose main area of inquiry has been the Holocaust. His most recent publication (with Leon Rappoport) is a revised edition of The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior. □*

## **On the Group Psychological Implications of the Popularity of Hitler's Willing Executioners**

**David R. Beisel**

**SUNY-Rockland Community College**

Whatever the scholarly merits and limitations of Goldhagen's work (see my forthcoming review essay in *The Journal of Psychohistory*), another aspect of his book is of interest to psychohistorians: the book's unusual popularity.

Histories are rarely found on nonfiction best seller lists, a truism equally valid for Third Reich studies despite continuous public interest in Nazis and Hitlerism. Contradictorily, Goldhagen's book has received wide public attention, being reviewed in many places, and all the right places (*New York Times* and *Washington Post*), with Goldhagen appearing on Charlie Rose.

Why this wide popular exposure of a history should be the case is somewhat puzzling. (The group psychohistorical questions are always: Why this? Why now?) Many have noted, like Gordon Craig in the *New York*

*Review of Books*, that there is nothing particularly new in Goldhagen's work. The role of "ordinary people" in Germany has been known by specialists in German history and the Holocaust for at least ten years through research of scholars like Christopher Browning, for example, and from the implications of Milgram's experiments on obedience to authority over a generation ago.

Additionally, historian John Weiss (Lehman College and CUNY Graduate Center) has a new book, *Ideology of Death* (Ingram Publishing), which argues much the same thesis as Goldhagen. Weiss' book was also widely and positively reviewed (*New York Times* and *Washington Post*), was promoted by a book tour, sold out its first printing, and is nuanced, balanced, soundly historical, and well-written. Yet, it attained neither the celebrity nor best seller status of Goldhagen's. Why?

Perhaps part of the answer is in the power of words: Goldhagen was able to work "Hitler" into his title. But popularity in group psychohistorical terms has more to do, it has always been argued, with unconscious feelings and fantasies. What the feelings and fantasies are in this specific case is hard to assess, but to further discussion and research, one can offer some speculations.

1) On one level, there may be some collective health-seeking, since more people may now be able to recognize the impulse for cruelty buried in everyone. Perhaps we are using the German experience to distance ourselves from that reality by acknowledging it in ourselves.

2) There is an element of oversimplification in Goldhagen's work, making it appealing in its simplicity.

3) *Hitler's Willing Executioners* allows us to avoid dealing with the reality that millions of non-German accomplices helped the Nazis.

4) In a post-Cold War world without enemies, it feels good to blame the Germans — once again.

5) Goldhagen's analysis allows people to encounter their own hidden sadism and anti-Semitism while denying them and blaming the Germans.

6) Lastly, Goldhagen's analysis is utterly

free of psychological/psychoanalytic orientation. He uses traditional notions of "rational man" to comfort his readers, thus allowing his work, not so remarkably, to become a best seller.

The merit to Goldhagen's study is its importance in popularizing the finding that ordinary people, not a few psychotics, are capable of such atrocities. What further study may reveal about Goldhagen's audience, however, is also important to our understanding of group fantasies. It may illustrate some of the psychic needs the Nazis fill in Americans.

*David R. Beisel, PhD, is an historian of Germany and a pioneer psychohistorian who has taught psychohistory to more students than anyone else in the world. At Rockland Community College of SUNY, where he has taught for 28 years, he won the Chancellor's Award for his outstanding teaching. Professor Beisel's book on the unconscious origins of the appeasement of Hitler's Germany is eagerly awaited by those who know his research. □*

*Editor's Note: Please see also the "Identifying with an Auschwitz Survivor" letter to the Editor on page 94. □*

## Introducing Nazi Germany to Undergraduates

**Robert A. Pois**  
University of Colorado

In teaching Nazi Germany, I have made use of psychohistorical approaches in both lecture and seminar courses, with my explorations in an undergraduate seminar taught since 1991 being the most fruitful. Most of the students in this class, taught in a residence hall, are freshmen and sophomores. This is their introduction to Nazi Germany. For this reason, I think it necessary to provide them with basic facts, developmental patterns, and hypotheses generic to more "traditional" historiographical approaches. In due course, psychological explanations and hypothesizing enter the picture in ways which have proved to be utterly unintrusive — indeed, quite "natural."

This is due to the fact that it soon becomes plain that there are two extremely

important issues, examination of which is crucial to gaining an understanding of the National Socialist phenomenon: 1) Why and how Adolf Hitler came to have the ferociously-held beliefs that he did. 2) Why and how those beliefs found resonance enough in a people which allowed him to come to power and hold onto it, with, at least until the Stalingrad disaster, the approval of the vast majority of Germans. Here, quite obviously, we are dealing with the problem of the relationship between the individual and general historical developments, one of the oldest of historical conundrums. And, in due course, it becomes plain that with regard to Nazi Germany, more traditional approaches can respond only by resorting to explanations grounded in demonology, historical contingency (or accident), or in quasi-teleological discourses (e.g., Marxist), which, over time, increasingly ring hollow.

On occasion, I've felt constrained to provide hints or suggestions regarding the gnawing question of the relationship between Hitler and general German and, in some cases, European, developments. However, many if not most students (last spring there were 27 students in the seminar), quite on their own, came to the conclusion that only explanations informed by psychology could bridge the gap between Hitler and the forces which had shaped him into a person who was so extraordinarily influential.

A few of the students were either greatly interested in psychology, or declared psychology majors, and these often led the way in class discussions. By mid-term, though, just about all the students had established connections between the circumstances of Hitler's family background (as laid out by Joachim Fest [in *Hitler* (1975)]) and leading characteristics of his ideology, his political ventures and political successes, and why the man's propagandistic appeals were so effective. In a word, through confronting the individual-general question, students had come not only to accept psychological explanations as offering at least regulative hypotheses with regard to Nazi Germany, but had come to see that there was nothing particularly exotic or bizarre about them. At the same time, these students, who by now were as much teaching themselves as being "taught," saw that aspects of "depth psychology" were themselves inherently

historical, that an individual's history always must be seen as being informed by general societal and cultural concerns. And that it is in fact the degree to which an individual product of a given society can make his own singular wishes, fantasies, and life-experiences congruent with those of society as a whole that will determine political success or failure.

The frustrated and angry child as father to the repressed but oh-so-successful political man, the *Lebensweg* of Adolf Hitler, became seen as both metaphor and guidepost for post-Great War [World War I] German society as a whole. At the same time, students became aware of how patterns of behavior which, under most social circumstances, would be seen as "dysfunctional," could (and can) be of immense value in societies which, battered by history, were (and are) themselves "dysfunctional." It was in this context that terms such as "displacement," "projection," and "transference" were introduced: "projection" was used by one of the psychology majors, and by this point in the term, nobody seemed to view these terms as abstractions. This was particularly the case, since some of the students were reflecting on personal traumatic experiences, and how these had influenced their respective social and political attitudes. Again, the issue which allowed for the acceptance of the role of psychohistorical explanations in gaining a partial understanding of the Nazi phenomenon was that of the relationship between the individual and general forces.

By the time the class confronted the Holocaust, and saw the movie *Night and Fog*, the young people understood that the horrors to which they were exposed were the ultimate purpose of Nazism and that these had resulted from a terrible synergy between a dysfunctional personal history and a traumatized society which was in the same state. One student, in commenting upon her reaction to *Night and Fog*, summed up her experiences with psychohistorical approaches very well. "To understand," she said, "is not to forgive; but to understand for the future. I guess that is all that we can do." She was crying, and she was not alone.

*Robert A. Pois has taught in the*

*Department of History of the University of Colorado in Boulder since 1965. His special interests are in Weimar Germany, Nazism, the Great War, and German Expressionism. Though he does not consider himself a psychohistorian he has a special interest in the field. (This article was previously published in Clio's Psyche, Special Student Edition, 1996-1997.)* □

## Bruce Mazlish: Pioneer Psychohistorian

*(Continued from page 69)*

*Toynbee Prize, an International Award in Social Science, and in 1994 co-won the Kayden National University Press Book Award (for the book The Fourth Discontinuity: The Co-evolution of Humans and Machines [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993]). He is on the editorial board of many journals including The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Political Psychology, and The Psychohistory Review.*

*Among the seventeen books Professor Mazlish has written or edited, the psychohistorical and psychobiographical ones are: Psychoanalysis and History, editor, 2nd and rev. ed. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1971, c. 1963); In Search of Nixon: A Psychohistorical Inquiry (New York & London: Basic Books, 1972); James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century (New York & London: Basic Books, 1975); Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy (New York: Basic Books, 1976); The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type (New York: Basic Books, 1976); and The Leader, the Led, and the Psyche: Essays in Psychohistory (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1990). This interview was conducted in November, 1995, in Professor Mazlish's ("BM") home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Dr. Pawelec ("TP").*

TP: How do you define psychohistory?

BM: I define psychohistory as the application of psychoanalytic concepts and theories to historical data and the re-examination of the psychoanalytic concepts and data in the light of historical materials.

TP: You were trained as an intellectual and cultural historian at Columbia. How did you come to psychoanalytically-informed history?

BM: I had taught Freud simply as a part of intellectual history and never thought of applying his ideas. But then I found stimulation in William Langer's 1958 American Historical Association presidential address, "The Next Assignment." He said, "If I were a young man, starting all over again, I would have worked at the frontiers of psychology and history." I thought that was so interesting that I went to the libraries and began to see what existed. I was open to it because I had entered into therapy as a result of the breakup of my marriage. I think there is always a personal aspect in any work in psychohistory and that was mine. During my research I was approached by a book representative who prevailed upon me to do a book: I edited the anthology *Psychoanalysis and History*, which first appeared in 1963. It was half philosophy of history and half a very orthodox application of Freud to history. That step led me to further steps because I became a pioneer, and you have to keep ahead of the wagons. I became interested in Erik Erikson's work, and began to give a course in history and psychoanalysis at MIT in 1964, which was, according to my knowledge, the first by an historian in the country. Of course, when you give a course, then you learn. My intellectual involvement in psychohistory is rather different from most people who go into the field. I have always been interested in the ways, the lenses, by which you look at human experience. So, for example, I am interested in economic theory, social theory, anthropological theory — and psychological theory, which is simply another way of looking at historical materials.

TP: As I became acquainted with psychohistorical works, I sensed that psychohistorians are perfectly right about one thing: everyone has not only intellectual reasons but also personal ones to become involved in a certain activity. Was your analysis helpful in becoming a psychohistorian? Was there any other special training you found useful?

BM: I think that personal experience with psychoanalysis is very important because the validity of doing psychohistory, after all, rests to a large extent on the validity of psychoanalysis,

in what way it is superior to mere intuition. In order to assess psycho-analysis, it is important that one has direct experience — then you are maximizing the possibilities. Obviously, just by studying Freud you can learn something; but the analysis is important for everybody. It's a little bit like having grown up listening to ordinary recordings and then getting stereo. It's just another dimension, and after you have come into that dimension the other people seem to be tone deaf. You almost find yourself saying, "Don't they see what is involved?!"

I was a founding member of two groups. One, starting around 1965, was the Group for Applied Psychoanalysis in the Boston area. We had between twenty and thirty people, half who were either historians, political scientists, or literature scholars, and the other half who were trained analysts. We met once a month for fifteen years. We presented papers and then exchanged work over them. That was a very important form of training: learning how clinicians approach materials.

Then I became involved with the Wellfleet Group. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences founded a research project concerning the validity of psychohistory, that is, how the field of psychohistory could be conceptualized. Erik Erikson, a lay analyst; Robert Jay Lifton and Fred Wyatt, psychiatrists; Philip Rieff, a sociologist; and myself, an historian, were the founding members of the group. We met in Wellfleet on Cape Cod for a week during summers, trying to establish the field.

There is a spectrum in training for psychohistory and there are pluses and minuses at both ends. One end is where you have had no personal experience with psychoanalysis and you have no formal training in history but have, for example, read Freud with great insight and can apply some of his ideas. The other end is where you not only have been trained as a historian, for example, have your PhD, but have gone through a formal analytic training in a recognized institute. Now, it seems to me that with the latter there is a danger along with the gain: you may stop thinking like a historian and begin thinking more and more like an analyst. One has to be very, very careful where one is along that spectrum. But there is room for people with all

lenses. It is something you have to decide for yourself — how much of the formal training you need.

TP: What was the reaction of the historical community to your *Psychoanalysis and History*?

BM: Well, it wasn't as bad as it was originally for Erikson. He published *Young Man Luther* in 1958 and it was not reviewed in any of the historical journals! My work was not ignored. The *Psychoanalysis and History* book came at a lucky moment when the field was beginning to form. Then I did some articles in *Encounter* magazine which received a certain amount of attention and caused some controversy. Next I published two books. You see, I had been doing research for fifteen years on a book entitled *James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century* where I was trying to combine intellectual history and psychoanalytic approaches. In the course of that work I was asked to give a paper on James Mill at the "Philosophers and Kings" conference, again sponsored by the American Academy. There I listened to most of the other papers, which were on the psychology of politicians and statesmen. There were papers on Atatürk, Nkrumah, and de Gaulle. Henry Kissinger, though he didn't attend, did a very good psychological paper on Bismarck; though most people don't know about it. Then I went off to England for a year to finish my archival work on the Mills in the British Museum and while I was there the American Presidential election campaign of 1968 was taking place. All my British friends and French friends were saying, "Who are these men, Nixon and Humphrey? What are they like? They are more important than our own Prime Ministers because one will have his finger on the [American nuclear] button." It got me to thinking and when I came back, just before the election, I tried to put together a team which would do a study of the President — possible scenarios about what kind of experiences he might have. But Nixon was elected before I could put it together. I couldn't get any funding, the funding agencies were very suspicious. Meanwhile, I had looked at materials on Nixon, the very slim public materials. He had been in public life for twenty-five years but there were only ten cards on him in the Harvard library catalogue at that time,

most of them useless. But, I thought I had a sense of the man. At the Group for Applied Psychoanalysis I gave the paper, "Richard Nixon: A Psychohistorical Study." It was published in the group's new journal, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. I got phone calls from publishers and finally agreed to do a full-length book with Basic Books. *In Search of Nixon* was a great success in terms of the number of books sold. Anyway, it came at the right moment, was published before Watergate, and then was rapidly followed by Watergate. I was a prophet! Nonsense — I didn't predict Watergate! But I did sketch a portrait which fitted the man who revealed himself after Watergate. I am either famous or infamous because of the Nixon book.

TP: Will you share with us more of your view of yourself and your work?

BM: Once you've done psychohistory, it influences all your future work. I was interested in the methodological aspects to a large extent, so, after the Nixon book which was based only on public documentation, I wanted to see what it would be like doing interviews. The next work I did was on Henry Kissinger [*Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy*] because he and I are more or less contemporaries; we were both in the Cambridge [Massachusetts] area; he is an intellectual worth some attention (he wrote on the Congress of Vienna, a period that I also worked on); and he was a major political figure at the time — I took seriously his position in foreign policy [U.S. Secretary of State]. Doing psychohistory with contemporary figures has both pluses and minuses. It's obviously a dangerous piece of business because political passions can run high. I decided I would push the methodology. I did well over two hundred interviews, including ones with most of the people on Kissinger's staff. At first he said maybe he would let me talk to him but after a few months said, "No." I wrote what, I think, is a very good book. But, for whatever reasons, it did not receive the kind of attention that the Nixon book did.

Another work that I think is important is the short book, *The Revolutionary Ascetic*. In it I tried to establish a typology. Normally, I don't particularly believe in typologies, but that time it came out of a conversation on the subject of revolution with British historian Eric Hobsbawm. He was saying, "It's amazing how often

puritanical types win out in revolutions. I'm not sure why." So, I began to try to understand what the dynamics were and started to combine Max Weber and Sigmund Freud. I put certain case studies in the book and, surprisingly, Cromwell was not a prototype of the revolutionary ascetic, nor was Robespierre, but Lenin turned out to be the prototype. I do think that the book embodies a major categorization, and I am very proud and pleased with that.

Next I grappled with group psychology because I felt I had done whatever I could in terms of individual psychobiographies. Most of what we are interested in as historians are events, large movements. I did not find Freud very satisfactory in terms of group psychology. So, I began to think about the relations of the leader and the led, which resulted in my last psychohistory book [*The Leader, the Led, and the Psyche*] which is a collection of some of my essays. On the basis of that I began to try to construct a group psyche and eventually I chose the American psyche. I gave a course where I used myths and legends and folklore, literary constructions, monuments, and rituals in relation to historical experiences. I think that this route can be pursued further.

TP: How can psychohistory contribute to theory building in politics or psychopolitics?

BM: It seems to me that political science, although the most ambitious of the human "sciences" in its title, is actually the least scientific. By and large politics is either political theory, meaning philosophy — which is very important and well developed — or comparative constitutional government. But because politics is so much based on human action with very little constancy, it's impossible to keep structure. The one place where modern political science could be and should be in advance of all previous political science is in regard to the psychological element involved. World politics is made of human beings with powerful motives often acted on in unconscious as well as conscious ways. For example, all kinds of collective ethnic experiences could best be approached through the psychological. No longer should anyone be able to do political science decently without a great deal of what goes on in the field of psychohistory.

TP: What is your experience in teaching psychohistory?

BM: I taught a one-semester graduate seminar in psychohistory at MIT starting in 1964 until the late 1980s. MIT does not normally have graduate students in history. But I have always had a number of students who were fascinated by the field — some of them even considered changes in their careers. I helped establish some courses at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, so those students could go over and study there. I would get students from Harvard because no such course was given at Harvard. The students were very receptive, surprisingly receptive, I would say.

What I tried to do was take a case study, for example, Adolf Hitler; introduce students to absolutely non-psychological interpretations and then gradually to more and more psychological ones from different viewpoints; and then to try to put together the case for ourselves. I had given them no exposure to psychoanalytic theory. Then for another case study we took personal documents called "Letters from Jenny." I asked students to read these primary materials with me and to make our own interpretation, again, before we had any formal experience of psychoanalysis. Next we did spend a number of weeks on psychoanalytic theory and concepts. We used a standard textbook, such as *The Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis* by Charles Brenner, other texts, and theoretical studies. Then we studied Erikson's *Young Man Luther*. Finally, the students had to do a major research paper on a subject of their choice. That worked well.

TP: Do your more recent courses include any psychoanalytical or psychohistorical topics?

BM: Only the course on Marx, Darwin, and Freud as creative scientists: what kind of social or human science did they represent? It is not a psychohistorical course as such. We use psychoanalytic theory to understand Marx before we come to Freud. It is almost all based on primary sources. We read a lot of Marx's documents unpublished during his lifetime. We look at a lot of Marx's material passed over by ordinary Marx scholars because they were not interested in personality. Then we do the same with Darwin. Of course, we study the non-

psychoanalytic aspects of Marx's and Darwin's theories, too. Then gradually we get to Freud. We examine Freud's early development of psychoanalytic theory in terms of our acquaintance with modern psychoanalysis.

TP: Can you recommend works by other psychohistorians?

BM: I think one of the best is Arthur Mitzman's *The Iron Cage*, which is on Max Weber. Erik Erikson's works still have great value. Also worthwhile are some of the essays that Peter Loewenberg has done. John Demos' work is very good. Robert Waite's book on Hitler is an interesting one — I think it was an important step. Other people who have really advanced the field, aside from those I just named, include Gerald Platt, a sociologist; Fred Weinstein, a historian; and, somewhat later, Charles Strozier.

TP: How do you view the two main psychohistorical journals, *The Psychohistory Review* and *The Journal of Psychohistory*?

BM: I'm still on the Board of Editors of the *Review*. It is a very good journal but has a very small circulation. It has not come out in a very attractive format because there has been little money. I had thought at first that the *Journal* was promising, with the initial work that Lloyd deMause was doing, digging out some very interesting archives. DeMause's background was in publishing and he knew how to maximize attention to the *Journal*. But it turned out to be very polemical with its quite varied and non-refereed articles, some quite wild. If the scholarly and intellectual aspects of the *Review* could be combined with the entrepreneurial aspects of the *Journal*, the field of psychohistory would be much, much better off.

TP: Do you see any problems in the field today?

BM: I think there are several problems with the field. One is in terms of its own intellectual claims. It becomes more and more clear that much of what has gone on so far is, as I call it, "parachuting" into certain materials. That is literally what I did with Nixon — I didn't bring 15 or 20 years of work to studying Nixon. The work I did on the Mills has a really lasting value not just in terms of the methodology but in

terms of the work itself on the Mills. All too frequently you don't have a combination of someone who is trained in psychohistorical methods *and* has spent years on the particular work. It has been too much of this "parachuting."

Next, in terms of methodology there is a very real limit to what one can do with psychobiography. You can approach it from Kohut's viewpoint, or you can use Sullivan's or Jung's — choose your side. Any [theoretical approach] will give you obviously greater insight [than having none] and is absolutely required in doing a biography. But where is the goal beyond that? The field itself has somewhat atrophied intellectually. It made enormous, substantive contributions but now has stopped growing, as has psychoanalysis as a theory. At this stage it is just hard to envision where one would go scientifically.

The next problems are that there is very little graduate training and there are no positions to which psychohistorians can be appointed as psychohistorians. If you are planning to make a career as a psychohistorian, you obviously have to do it as part of your work as an historian — be an American historian or an European historian and get hired on that basis. The sociological aspect of the field hasn't developed as far as it should.

TP: Do you think the field has lost its importance?

BM: My sense is that many of the earlier psychohistorical attitudes and works, originally overtly rejected and attacked, have nonetheless entered into the mainstream of American historiography. You know, one form of flattery is to attack your opponent and then to imitate and incorporate what he or she is doing into your framework. To a large extent that has happened. But, there is a lot of Freud-bashing going on. Psychoanalysis is under severe attack. It stems from a number of factors, one of which is an inattention to the history of science. That is why, in putting together the essays in *The Leader, the Led, and the Psyche*, I thought it very important to write a couple of new essays. In one I explored the Darwinian basis of Freudian psychoanalysis and, therefore, Freud's claims to be maintaining a biological as well as

an hermeneutic aspect, as he claimed to be forming a new science. Most people who are in psychohistory have no real interest in that aspect of it. There was one really good book on Freud from the point of view of the history of science, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979) by Frank Sulloway, a colleague of mine at MIT. Brilliant book! It shows where Freud was coming from, why he proceeded the way he did, and, therefore, what his real contribution is. Even if one were to maintain that 90% of Freud's specific work is not particularly valuable any longer — and I'm not saying this is true — he made an enormous, enormous breakthrough.

TP: Despite the problems and weaknesses, how can psychohistorians have more impact in academia, how can they strengthen their work?

BM: It is a very difficult question. Most universities are, if anything, cutting back on hiring in general. What is possible in an expanding climate becomes much, much more difficult in this contracting climate, irrespective of psychohistory itself.

How could you move psychohistory forward? Somehow you will have to get the best, the brightest people to become further engaged in it, and I don't know exactly how to do that because psychoanalysis arouses a great deal of dislike, or to use the technical phrase — resistance. People feel very threatened by it in a way that they do not by other kinds of theoretical involvements. Now, it is one of those situations in which you have to be very careful because you could say, "Ah, it isn't because psychohistory is not a very good field. Why it is rejected is because people have these resistances." That is too easy, too tricky. But I think it is also true that the personal resistances are there.

If the field is to go forward, it has to become far more solid than it has been. One should avoid wild hypothesizing, such as that we can predict the President is about to guide us to war. We should not be tempted into rather immediate, contemporary, quickie studies. The field of psychohistory needs much more concerted effort. For example, central to my book on the Mills is a re-examination of the

Oedipus Complex. We need a serious discussion on the methodology I used. Any other book that is published, for example, on the history of the Civil War or a straight political or social history, will get a fully sustained discussion, even if it is only critical! That does not happen in our field. Most people do not know much about the Mills, or do not want to discuss the book. Mitzman writes a book about Max Weber. Many people do not even know about Max Weber, and those who do know about him are not particularly interested in the psychoanalytic approach. I do not see how the field can advance until this problem is solved.

*Tomasz Pawelec, a professor of methodology and historiography at Silesian University in Katowice, Poland, was a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Brandeis University, 1995-1996, and is doing a research study and preparing a monograph on the history of psychohistory. (Our Editor asked Professor Pawelec to do the interview and Bob Lentz helped to edit it.)* □

## Political Psychobiography of President Clinton

**Herbert Barry, III**  
University of Pittsburgh

Book Review of Stanley A. Renshon, *High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. 402 pages, \$24.95. Also, Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*. New York: New York University Press, 1996. 515 pages, \$34.95.

This prolific author, a leading political scientist who edits the journal *Political Psychology*, assesses the personality and Presidential performance of Clinton in *High Hopes* and in two chapters of the second volume. Renshon provides diverse information and perceptive observations about the President, including his childhood and youth.

An unusual and valuable contribution of *High Hopes* is the discussion of the contrasting influences of Clinton's mother and maternal grandmother. His mother is described as vain,

hedonistic, and absent for about half the time in his first four years. Furthermore, she was often unavailable even when living with him. His mother's mother was strict, moralistic, nurturant, and very ambitious for him. The problems were aggravated by the rivalry and hostility between his mother and grandmother. Clinton's paradoxical combinations of traits might be partly attributable to the differences between his two maternal models.

The author gives an assessment of the traits needed by a President of the United States. Clinton obviously excels in intelligence, ambition, energy, and social attractiveness. Nevertheless, the author emphatically and repeatedly describes Clinton as being deficient in character. The President is thereby portrayed as unable to provide consistent, effective leadership toward important goals. Clinton's shortcomings are primarily attributed to a flaw that appears to be the vice of gluttony. The author does not use that term but describes Clinton as a person who wants to have it all and who is unable to set limits. Despite being selfish and opportunistic, Clinton needs to be validated as ethically perfect. Some of his verbalizations appear to have the purpose of convincing himself, in addition to other people, that his deceptive actions are always honorable rather than dishonest or self-serving. Examples of Clinton's deceptions are his evasion of military service during the Vietnam War and some of his 1992 Presidential campaign promises. More recent examples are his modifications of some policies soon after he became President, even before the election of 1994 shifted the Congress from Democratic to Republican majorities.

The author concludes that Clinton's fundamental character is deceitful, inconsistent, and selfish. For example, Clinton's frequent expressions of empathy are described as strategic empathy, which exploits the other person, rather than empathic attunement, which shares the other person's feelings. Disapproval and disappointment appear to be the principal sentiments of the author toward Bill Clinton.

I question the validity of the adverse judgment by the author and think it is related to the genre he is using. In conventional biography the biographer generally admires the hero's performance and emphasizes his or her strengths

and virtues, tending to idealize the subject. In psychobiography, by contrast, the author tends to demonize the subject with an emphasis on the hidden weaknesses and other character flaws of the hero. A political scientist, such as the author, might be overly influenced by the human frailties and foibles revealed by the psychobiographical investigation.

Deceptive and inconsistent behavior may result from a politician's virtues of flexibility and adaptability. Clinton's opportunism may be seen as tactics in the service of fundamental ethical principles. His character was undoubtedly influenced by the strict moral standards of his maternal grandmother. Clinton's mother was a recipient of the same moral traditions. It is my contention that her son may have been influenced more profoundly by this aspect of his mother's personality than by her vanity and hedonism.

In common with Clinton, Franklin D. Roosevelt was often deceptive, inconsistent, and exploitative. Most historians agree that the idealism and moral values of Franklin D. Roosevelt were more fundamental than his character flaws. I believe that future historians will reach a similar consensus about Clinton. I remember that shortly after Clinton's inauguration as President in 1993, a reporter asked him how he felt. He replied that, of course, he had a tremendous feeling of responsibility. I believe this was a sincere statement. Duty and service in addition to intelligence and ambition were repeatedly displayed in his earlier life in addition to his first term as President of the United States.

The two books by Stanley Renshon contribute much valuable information about the present President of the United States. The author summarizes well the information from prior biographies and other sources. The large reference list includes newspaper and magazine articles in addition to many books for scholars and for the general public. The numerous endnotes for each chapter add detailed documentation and discussion.

Although I disagree with the principal conclusion by the author, *High Hopes* contributes usefully to psychobiographical analysis. It is a scholarly, detailed analysis of an

important and interesting contemporary politician. I believe it will improve the reputation of psychobiographies. The preparation of this analysis during Clinton's first term as President has the merit of stating conclusions and predictions that can be supported or refuted by Clinton's subsequent performance as President.

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*Associate Editor's Note: We are pleased to note the correctness of Barry's previous predictions regarding Clinton's re-election in the March, 1995, issue. There he called for Clinton's "assertive and conciliatory" leadership to result in cooperation and "compromise with the Republican majorities in Congress.... slow growth of productivity and inflation.... [and] peaceful settlement of [international] disputes," leading to "the 'man from Hope' ... be[ing] President as reach the second millennium." □*

*Editor's Note: Please see also the "Presidential Election Meeting" letter by a psychoanalyst on page 96. □*

## **The Demonization of Hillary Rodham Clinton and (Anna) Eleanor Roosevelt**

**Rita Ransohoff  
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Why have two prominent First Ladies been thoroughly attacked and vilified in the press as if they had no feelings at all? These two women share genuine social concerns for children, for public health, and for other good causes! Eleanor had even been attacked for her looks. I shall never forget when, just after the

birth of my second child, the obstetrician came into my room at the hospital. Barely asking me how I was feeling, he began to sound off about "buck-toothed Eleanor." At the time there was a popular musical on Broadway called *Anything Goes*. One of its lines was "If Mrs. R. with all her trimmings can broadcast a bed by Simmons, then Franklin knows, anything goes!" (Mrs. Roosevelt at that time had a radio program sponsored by the Simmons Mattress Company.) It made no difference to her critics that she had a daily column, "My Day," which had a large reading public nationwide and addressed the concerns of women.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, for her part, has the effrontery to continue to retain her maiden name. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., published "Hating Hillary" in the *New Yorker Magazine* (February 26 - March 4, 1996), from which I will extract samples of the abuse heaped upon her. William Safire called her a "congenital liar" and David Letterman, on his late-night talk show, made this crude joke: "These are the top ten surprises of the O.J. Simpson video.... No. 5: The revelation that the gloves are Hillary's size" (See the *New York Times*, July 7, 1996). To me it is not funny to portray the First Lady as guilty of committing a double murder! Pat Robertson, the TV preacher and founder of the Christian Coalition, in speeches, newsletters, and TV appearances denounces "the Enemy of the Day — humanists, homosexuals, liberals, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and feminists" (Robert Boston, *The Most Dangerous Man in America? Pat Robertson and the Rise of the Christian Coalition*, 1996, p. 64). In the face of such unreasonable criticism it is time we ask, why is there such naked hatred of these two women? Is it partly because of their much publicized activity?

Eleanor had good reason to be as active as she was. Because of FDR's paralysis, she became his eyes and ears and was quite thorough in her investigations. She became a ubiquitous presence. There is a well-known, much reproduced *New Yorker* cartoon of a cart descending into a coal mine to visit the men underground. The caption reads, "My God! Here comes Eleanor!"

Why was this First Lady so resented? In the first place, she came after First Ladies of a very traditional stripe, such as *Mrs. Harding*,

*Mrs. Coolidge*, and *Mrs. Hoover* — remembered for leading the Girl Scouts, not the downtrodden of society. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (her maiden as well as married name) was born an aristocrat, among Republicans. She was not even interested in the vote for women. However, her interests changed when she became the wife of the Governor of New York, just as Hillary Rodham Clinton changed when her husband was elected Governor of Arkansas and then President.

Mrs. Roosevelt *really* cared about what happened to people; she had grown up wanting to be of service and now found her outlet. There was something in her righteousness, however, her [heavy] touch, which was without lightness or humor. She was an all-powerful, all-seeing mother — a strict superego. Her public speaking voice was high-pitched and unpleasant to listen to, at least until one of FDR's advisors, Louis Howe, took her in hand and helped her learn how to modulate it and feel comfortable speaking in public.

In the thirties and forties, before the Feminist Movement, there was a basic resentment against wives who became politically active. Women were supposed to stay at home as wives and mothers, supporters of their husbands. So, for many reasons, Eleanor was roundly and viciously attacked by people like the columnist Westbrook Pegler.

Now, turning to Hillary. As we know, she is a bright, successful lawyer, Yale Law School graduate, wife, and mother. Early in his administration, Bill Clinton appointed her to head a committee to devise a new health plan. The committee made a number of mistakes, partly out of inexperience with Washington politics. Critics complained of the committee's not holding public hearings and of wanting to change too many aspects of health care. Opposition by the medical establishment and the insurance companies as well as partisan politics were successful in defeating the Clinton Health Plan.

Similarly, Mrs. Roosevelt was given a job by her husband. Since she wanted to be a part of the war effort, the First Lady was appointed to the Office of Civilian Defense, headed by New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. But air raid drills and the creation of

underground hiding places in case of an attack were not what interested her. Rather, she wanted to create a women's volunteer group that would see to it there was adequate daycare as well as maternal and child health care because women in increasing numbers were going to work in the war effort.

Then came the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the United States' active involvement in the war. Congress took over: its members did not think that LaGuardia could run New York City and also focus on the Office of Civilian Defense. Many people had begun to criticize Mrs. Roosevelt's activities and appointments despite her creation of a powerful committee to get the job done and to offer political protection (See Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor and Franklin*, 1971, pp. 640-653). In the era of FDR the people of the United States, or their representatives (or both), clearly were not ready for an activist First Lady.

Hillary Clinton also followed a number of wives of Presidents who did not aspire to open involvement in public life: Mrs. Truman, Mrs. Eisenhower, Mrs. Nixon, Mrs. Reagan (who was roundly criticized for being too much the power behind the throne), and of course, Mrs. Bush. The latter, with her white hair and matronly figure, was seen as waiting at home for George. President Bush encouraged women to emulate her volunteer activities included in the "thousand points of light" and available to (middle-class) women. And, of course, Barbara Bush was best known for her best-selling book about the White House dog, Millie!

A number of writers have tried to understand why there is such hatred of Hillary Clinton. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in his article "Hating Hillary" mentioned above, asked various prominent people the reasons for their intense dislike of this woman. Sally Quinn, a Washington insider, answered him with an old joke. It is about a farmer who faces a series of catastrophes that leave him bankrupt. He asks God, "Why me, Lord?" And the Lord answers, "I don't know, there's something about you that pisses me off." Quinn paused, then said, "That's the problem — there's just something about her that pisses people off." Arianna Huffington, a syndicated columnist and the Greek-born wife of the wealthy and conservative Californian, Michael Huffington, said, "A lot of people are

uncomfortable with her self-righteousness." Peggy Noonan, a speechwriter for both Reagan and Bush, spoke of "her 'apple-cheeked certitude' that is 'political in its nature and grating in its effects'" (pp. 116-118). I do not have the space to quote further the multifarious examples of negative feelings for the First Lady.

There is what is called "the strong woman bogey." Though some say it's nonsense, from a psychological perspective I believe that men still feel threatened by powerful women who can compete, take away their jobs, and perhaps, worst of all, are not dependent creatures focused on making men happy.

Frank Rich, in his column for the *New York Times* ("Jo Rodham March," January 15, 1995), wrote about how Newton Gingrich's mother twice during television interviews had the temerity to call Mrs. Clinton a "bitch." He continued, "No one so much as considered giving the First Lady an apology, even if only out of minimal respect for her office." I also firmly agree with his conclusion, "You don't have to love Mrs. Clinton, or share her politics, to feel her demonization tells us much less about who she is than it does about a country that still feels threatened when its little women grow tall," as it was with Eleanor Roosevelt! At least polls show that women are much more favorably inclined towards Hillary than are men.

One of Mrs. Clinton's slips, in a brief show of impatience during the 1992 Presidential campaign, caused trouble for her when, in answer to a question, she said, "Well, I could be at home baking brownies!" The media is most unforgiving. She has been the subject of enormous moral criticism during the Whitewater hearings. There is irony in Alfonse D'Amato, whose ethics were proven to be questionable, being the leader of the Senate pack trying to crucify Hillary.

The political fallout of this abuse has been costly for Mrs. Clinton. In spite of the favorable reception of her book on support for the education of children, *It Takes A Village*, her public image has been treated carefully by the White House. She is excluded from weekly meetings of the inner circle of Clinton's political advisers, even though her chief of staff, Maggie Williams, attends. "If she took part," officials

said, "critics would accuse her of too much influence on the campaign."

Michael D. McCurry, the White House press secretary, said, "No matter what she does, people will characterize her unfairly" (Maureen Dowd, "Liddy, Hillary and Nancy," *New York Times*, July 18, 1996). As of this writing on August 16, 1996, the *Times* reports that a role at the Democratic Convention for Mrs. Clinton is being carefully worked out for her. It is still only "hinted" that she will make a speech at the convention in Chicago, her hometown.

Another similarity between the two First Ladies is their husbands' unfaithfulness. We are told that Eleanor stopped having intercourse with Franklin after the birth of her sixth child within ten years. She was devastated when she found a correspondence between FDR and her social secretary, Lucy Mercer. She offered him a divorce which his mother, Sara, roundly opposed — it would have been devastating to his political ambitions. Eleanor admitted how depressed she was after this discovery in 1919. Despite this crisis, she and Franklin developed feelings of closeness and dependency that, for her, were once more shaken when she learned that Lucy was with her husband in Warm Springs when he died.

We know little about Hillary's response to the Jennifer Flowers business despite the candidate's wife standing by her man on national television and denouncing Flowers' allegations as "trash [sold to the tabloids for] cash." Bob Woodward in his book, *The Choice* (1996), took up this matter in his material about Hillary's relationship with her therapist, Jean Houston. It seems that Houston is a strong and outgoing person, who inspired confidence in Mrs. Clinton. Hillary accepted some of Dr. Houston's advice and got into imaginary conversations with Eleanor Roosevelt. It was natural enough for her to feel empathy for the person of a First Lady who was famous in her lifetime and also the subject of great criticism. Hillary was interested, so we are told, in how Eleanor had dealt with all the vilification she had received.

There is poetic justice in the fact that Mrs. Roosevelt, after she left the White House, was appointed to the committee creating the United Nations and was instrumental in writing

the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. In her travels on a multitude of missions for good causes, both public and private, Eleanor Roosevelt became known as "First Lady of the World!" We do not know how history will ultimately judge Hillary Clinton.

On a wonderful note, the two worlds of these women did come together in a most dignified and appropriate way. The New York Historical Society had an exhibit, "Becoming Eleanor Roosevelt: The Early New York Years, 1884-1933." In it there was a lovely picture of Hillary Rodham Clinton in the White House with Franklin D. Roosevelt III along with Herbert Zohn and others who are active members of the group raising funds for a larger-than-life statue of Eleanor Roosevelt by Penelope Jencks. This memorial will be unveiled in the Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Park in New York's Riverside Park, at 72nd Street, this coming [now past] October. It will be one of the very few statues of women in New York City and a fitting tribute to a First Lady who accomplished much in the face of enormous criticism and demonization.

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## Trotsky's Vision of a "Radiant and Bright Future"

**Ralph Colp, Jr.**  
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On several occasions in his life, beginning when he was young and then extending into his old age, Leon Trotsky made passionate statements about his identity as a revolutionary. What follows will discuss how he came to make these statements, and what they reveal about the interactions between his

perceptions of his personal needs, desires and talents, and his views of human history.

In 1896-1897, when he was 17 or 18 years old, Trotsky experienced an identity crisis. It was first manifested by estrangement from the "petty-bourgeois outlook and habits of life" of his father. This son rejected his father's "instinct of acquisition," with its harshness and stinginess toward individuals who were poor and needy, and his father's desire that, as a favorite son, he complete his education so as to advance his family's large farm of Yanovka, in Southern Russia (Leon Trotsky, *My Life*, 1931, pp. 83-84, 96-104).

He then left school and his home and joined a "Union" of young rebels in the provincial town of Nikolayev. There he became a leader, a writer who printed and mimeographed revolutionary proclamations to the workers of Nikolayev, and — influenced by his love for his Union comrade Alexandra Sokolovshaya — came to believe in Marxism. During the next three years he was arrested, confined to prisons — where he married Alexandra in a jail cell — and afterwards deported with her to Siberia. She would recollect that at this time, while his feelings for individuals changed, "in one thing he never changes — that is his devotion to the revolution. In all my revolutionary experience I have never met any other person so completely consecrated" (Max Eastman, *Leon Trotsky: The Portrait of a Youth*, 1926, p. 97).

In his two years of exile in Siberia he regularly wrote articles for the liberal newspaper, *The Eastern Review*, in which he creatively applied Marxist ideas to diverse social and literary topics, and began to develop a distinctive literary style. His articles became popular among Russian dissidents in Siberia, Russia, and Europe; and thus, along with being a revolutionary, he first realized his long-held ambition of becoming a member of a small and special group of "authors, journalists, and artists" who to him "always stood for a world which was more attractive than any other, one open only to the elect" (Leon Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 65). In a February 17, 1901, essay in the *Review*, entitled "On Pessimism, Optimism and the Twentieth Century, and Much More," he wrote:

*Dum spiro, spero!* Where there's life,

there's hope, exclaims the optimist about the future. – If my life were that of the heavenly bodies, I would show complete indifference to a pitiful lump of muck lost in the infinite universe.... But I am – *a person!* And “universal history” is for me – everything! And while I still breathe – I will struggle for the sake of the future, that radiant and bright future, when humanity, strong and excellent, controls the spontaneous current of its history and directs it to a limitless horizon of beauty, joy, happiness.... *Dum spiro, spero!* (Quoted from Philip Pomper, *Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin: The Intelligentsia and Power*, 1990, p. 119).

In the above passage, because of the need to conform to Tsarist censorship, Trotsky avoided using specific names and terms. The uncensored message of his passage may be summarized as follows. In the foreseeable future, because of the revolutionary struggles of himself and other like-minded Marxists, human history will undergo revolutions that will overthrow existing governments, and bring about a Socialist era of unlimited happiness and beauty. This was a utopian vision of the future that was exceptional in the intensity of its optimism, and that would — with only temporary interruptions during illness and depression — continue to inspire Trotsky for the rest of his life.

While it has been suggested that his vision was a “messianic faith,” originating in early, brief exposures by both his parents to Jewish beliefs (Robert Wistrich, *Trotsky: Fate of a Revolutionary*, 1979, pp. 14-16, 20, 22, 211), his later memories of these beliefs (when he had come to distance himself from his “Jewishness”) are too meager to either support or refute this suggestion. What seems more plausible is the contention of Pomper that in his vision Marxist doctrine became a “substitute religion and therapy” (Pomper, p. 120). An ideology that, by fusing his sense of a revolutionary self with “humanity” and history, enlarged and enhanced his sense of that self; and a psychotherapy that countered his tendency to have episodes of psychosomatic illness and depression, and nullified the influence on him of the depressions (and sometimes suicides) of his revolutionary

comrades (Leon Trotsky, *My Life*, pp. 73, 126). His vision also widened the gulf between him and the “petty-bourgeois” world of his father.

In the years 1902-1907, for unknown reasons, his love for Alexandra changed into a love for Natalia Sedova, a Russian Marxist who became the mother of his two sons and the person who shared his Marxist vision as well as the most intimate events of his life. While he called Natalia his wife, he never obtained a legal divorce from Alexandra.

In these years, after being one of the leaders of the failed Russian Revolution of 1905, he forecast the future with his theory of Permanent Revolution: that a Socialist Revolution in Russia would stimulate European Socialist Revolutions, require the aid of these revolutions in order to develop its Socialist culture, and eventually be followed by other revolutions, leading to world Socialism — and the realization of his vision. Permanent Revolution did not become a reality, however. For the rest of his life — as he underwent periods of power and powerlessness — he would experience his vision in various ways.

In 1917-1924, as one of the two pre-eminent leaders of the successful Russian Bolshevik Revolution, Trotsky showed a powerful authoritarian side of himself. In October, 1917, after seizing power for the Bolsheviks, he excluded other Socialist groups from the new government, describing these Socialists as “just so much refuse which will be swept into the garbage-heap of history!” (John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, 1935, pp. 93-94). The ruthlessness of his words were implemented when the Bolsheviks suppressed the Constituent Assembly — composed of both Socialist and non-Socialist political parties — in January, 1918.

In April, 1918, influenced by his belief that the Bolsheviks represented the “revolutionary energy of the workers and soldiers” and the “will of the masses” (Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, 1954, p. 313) and by his hopes that European Socialist Revolutions were imminent, Trotsky verbalized his vision in a speech to Russian workers:

We shall turn the whole globe into one world republic of Labour.... We shall

create one brotherly state: the land which nature gave us. This land we shall plough and cultivate ... into one blooming garden, where our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will live as in a paradise.... We shall create such a paradise with our own toiling hands *here*, in *this* world, upon earth, for all, for our children and grandchildren and for all eternity! (Leon Trotsky, "A Paradise in this World," not dated, pages 19-20.)

In 1918-1920, in the Russian Civil War between Whites and Reds, Trotsky as Commissar of War organized and led the Red Army to victory by combining coercion with inspiration: shooting Reds who deserted, placing loyal "blocking" units behind unreliable army units with orders to shoot if they retreated without permission, intimidating the ex-Tsarist officers — who served with the Reds — by making hostages of their families and friends, and telling his soldiers that he and they were "participants in [an] unprecedented historic attempt ... to attain ... a new society, in which all human relations will be based on ... co-operation and man will be man's brother, not his enemy." As he spoke he gave his listeners "the impression that he was capable of sacrificing himself" for his ideas (Dmitri Volkogonov, *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary*, 1966, pp. 158, 179; Deutscher, pp. 441-42).

In the spring of 1920 Trotsky published a pamphlet, *Terrorism and Communism*, in which he defended terrorism as a necessary and effective method of coercing and breaking the wills of those individuals who opposed Bolshevism and who were not executed. It was the most authoritarian of his writings, written at a time when his authority over others was at its peak.

After the death of Lenin in 1924, followed by the ascendancy of Stalin, Trotsky rapidly lost his power. At first, when Stalin forced him out of all of his political positions in Russia, and exiled him to Turkey in 1929-1933, he remained optimistic that he would be able to return to power in Russia, and he wrote, "I know no *personal* tragedy. I know the change of two chapters of the revolution" (Leon Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 582).

However, in the years after leaving Turkey, 1933-1940, he was a stateless exile, denied entry by America, England, and most European countries, expelled by France and Norway. Trotsky was only able to find refuge in Mexico, which became his last home. In these years his peripatetic life became increasingly more horrible. In Russia his memory and ideas were systematically vilified; prominent Old Bolsheviks were forced to accuse him — in public trials in Moscow — of Fascist connections, murders, and bizarre crimes; and a genocide was carried out against his acquaintances and relatives. His first wife Alexandra and younger son Sergey were executed in 1937-1938, and in 1938 his older son and political collaborator, Leon Sedov, died mysteriously — perhaps killed by Stalin's secret police (NKVD). Under Stalin's close direction, the NKVD spied on Trotsky's activities, stole his documents, and then organized his August, 1940, assassination in Mexico.

His wife Natalia, who throughout his exile was his most constant and closest companion, relates how, after confronting the impact of some of Stalin's blows, Trotsky suffered acute physical and mental distresses: psychosomatic symptoms, "inconsolable anguish," depression manifested by fatigue and feeling "sorry to be alive," and intense grief manifested by tearfulness and weeping. The distresses would then abate and, although expecting further blows and assassins, he would regain his full powers as a writer. A writer who, in the course of making observations on a very wide range of subjects, continued to develop his literary style and produce works which the literary critic Edmund Wilson rated as "probably a part of our permanent literature" (Victor Serge and Natalia Sedova Trotsky, *The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky*, 1975, pp. 219, 245, 251, 255; Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, 1940, p. 436).

His courage and toughness in adversity, and ability to regain his creativity after receiving blows that would have permanently traumatized the mental capacities of most thinkers were influenced by two forces in his life: his wife and his revolutionary vision. He wrote about both of these forces six months before his death, in some notes he entitled *Testament*. In this, after

thanking his band of supporters in one sentence, "not naming anyone in particular because I cannot name them all," he concisely summarized the attributes of Natalia: "In addition to ... being a fighter for the cause of socialism ... she remained an inexhaustible source of love, magnanimity, and tenderness" (*Testament* is published in Leon Trotsky, *Trotsky's Diary in Exile, 1935*, 1976, pp. 165-167).

The feelings that both had for each other were shown most poignantly in his account of how he and she withdrew to their Mexican home and mourned the death of their son Sedov:

His [Sedov's] mother ... and I are living through these terrible hours recalling his image, feature by feature, unable to believe that he is no more and weeping because it is impossible not to believe.... No one knew us and no one knows us, our strong and weak sides, so well as he did. He was part of us, our young part... [which] together with our boy has died[, killing] everything that still remained young within us (Leon Trotsky, *Leon Sedov*, 1938, pp. 26-27).

After this mourning he returned to his writing.

In his *Testament*, following his account of Natalia, he wrote about himself:

For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist.... If I had to begin all over again ... the main course of my life would remain unchanged.... My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.

Three years earlier, in 1937, speaking in English to the Commission investigating the charges against him in the trials in Moscow, he had described his Communist faith as "more mature" than in his youth (*The Case of Leon Trotsky*, 1937, p. 585).

There were several reasons his faith in a Communist future was "more mature" and "firmer" in 1937-1940 than it had been in 1901. His faith had directly and indirectly been associated with, and tempered and annealed by, his great triumphs of leadership in the Russian Revolution and Civil War: he had inspired

workers and Red Army soldiers, and this inspiration had influenced him to become authoritarian, and a proponent of terrorism. It has been observed that his

powerful commitment to and faith in the communist future also gave Trotsky ... an unshakable conviction that their devaluing and instrumentalising of the lives of present persons for the sake of that radiant communist future was unquestionably and unqualifiedly justified (George L. Kline, "The Defence of Terrorism: Trotsky and His Major Critics," in Terry Brotherstone and Paul Dukes, editors, *The Trotsky Reappraisal*, 1992, p. 157).

Another reason for the firmness of his Communist faith in 1940 was that his recollections of the ruthlessness of his actions did not cause him doubts or mental conflicts. He believed that his ruthlessness had been necessary for the victory of his ideas and part of his identity as a Communist, and that it had not been responsible for the rise of Stalin's totalitarian state. (He viewed Stalinism not as a continuation of Bolshevism but as its reactionary "negation," caused by the defeat of European revolutions and the political isolation of Russia [Leon Trotsky, *Stalinism and Bolshevism*, 1937, pp. 14-15]).

His immediate reasons for writing his *Testament* had been his fears about the dangers from his "high and still rising blood pressure." Four days after writing this, he added a postscript to the *Testament*, stating that he and Natalia had agreed that it was preferable that he commit suicide rather than become an invalid from the effects of hypertension. He concluded,

Whatever may be the circumstances of my death I shall die with unshaken faith in the Communist future. This faith in man and his future gives me even now such powers of resistance as cannot be given by any religion.

In this conclusion, the last of his written declarations of faith, he proclaims — with a touch of arrogance — that his atheistic Communist belief gives him a greater power to resist adversity than the power given by religion. Thus his early joyous utopian vision of history,

that later motivated him to make a history that was grim, brutal, and world-shaking, gave him in his old age the illusion of possessing a special personal strength.

It was, however, an illusion which, despite the loss of his power to influence history and practically everything else in his life, enabled him to express his literary creativity and produce writings that continue to be read today.

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## The Extremes Touch: Hidden Meaning in History

Ted L. Cox

The Psychohistory Forum and NPAP

At first blush it seems simple to study the human mind. After all, it's the only thing we can really know from the inside out. And yet, the human mind is designed, or has evolved, in such a way that it deceives itself: it keeps secrets from itself in order to protect itself and the group from excessive stress. It denies or represses unbearably painful parts of reality such as death, weakness, insignificance, and Oedipal issues. When this system of denial breaks down, it wrecks havoc on the individual and groups concerned. Accordingly, understanding how the human mind functions may be the most daunting endeavor ever undertaken. It's like trying to put a stethoscope on each card of a house of cards and you are the house of cards.

The duality of the human mind produced by the necessary shunting of large sections of reality to the unconscious is further complicated by another duality: the capacity of the mind to alternate or share control of mental functions between the left and right sides of the brain. The left side of the brain is what we use to study ourselves with — it is the rational, scientific part. The brain's right side is concerned with feelings,

intuitive processes, the arts, and non-verbal communication.

This left-right duality of the human brain first came to my attention when studying a confusing phrase in Spanish: *Los extremos se tocan*, or "the extremes touch." My considerable difficulty in conceptualizing this idea was because my left brain was, and still is, the dominant hemisphere of my mind and my right brain had been stifled. It seems that American and other English-speaking cultures in general inhibit right brain activity. Romance-language, Gaelic, and Oriental cultures preserve a larger share of consciousness for the right side of the brain.

Eastern thought, where right and left brain have not been so much "divorced" as in Western societies, has never lost the awareness of the paradoxical nature of merged opposites. The following quote, written 2500 years ago, is from *The Way of Chuang Tzu* as translated by Thomas Merton (Boston: Shambhala, 1992, pp. 59-60).

Tao is obscured when men understand only one of a pair of opposites, or concentrate only on a partial aspect of being. Then clear expression also becomes muddled by mere wordplay, affirming this one aspect and denying all the rest.

Hence the theory of reversal that opposites produce each other, depend on each other, and complement each other.

From another ancient wisdom literature tradition there is "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (St. Mark 9:24). This epitomizes the quandary of the human who holds in some core or primary section of the self two contradictory feelings. My suspicion is that in this case, however, as well as opposites embedded together in the right-brain, the belief in God reflects the right brain which is more attuned to spiritual-social endeavors and that the disbelief emanates largely from the left brain which can only accept rational conclusions. It may be that we have to believe in God in order to preserve our sanity and membership in the human race, *and* that we also have to *not* believe in order to function in today's highly rational and left brain-dominated world.

Hence, a concept like "the extremes

touch," which reflects the circular logic of the right brain, may flourish in an Oriental culture but wither and die in a modern Occidental one where English is spoken. Understanding between individuals and societies becomes very difficult, if not impossible, if both parties are not using the same side of the brain when they attempt to communicate. I believe that other therapists and psychohistorians might benefit from increased familiarity with this topic. For example, on an individual level, increased familiarity with one's own right brain functions promotes enjoyment of art, music, poetry, intuitive processes, and gestalt perceptions. Also, some of the great cataclysms of history, such as Ireland's wars and the rise and fall of Communism, become more understandable within this framework.

Sigmund Freud pointed out how extremes touch in dreams and in language in some of his earliest work (SE 4:318):

The way in which dreams treat the category of contraries and contradictories is highly remarkable. It is simply disregarded. "No" seems not to exist so far as dreams are concerned. They show a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing.

[Footnote added 1911:] I was astonished to learn from a pamphlet ... that the most ancient languages behave exactly like dreams in this respect. In the first instance they have only a single word to describe the two contraries at the extreme ends of a series of qualities or activities (e.g., "strong-weak," "old-young," "far-near," "bind-sever")....

Freud's reference to the evolution of language also points to the previous dominance of the right brain in history. That is, language seems to have come into being at a time during cultural development when the right brain dominated behavior and when opposites "nested" together and acquired the same word to designate them. Julian Jaynes describes some of the early social cataclysms in the Near East (ca. 1200 B.C.E) as reciprocally related to the changeover from right brain to left brain-oriented societies — from small, homogeneous societies

governed by consensus and hallucination to larger, more complex ones controlled by violence.

To the extent that religious convictions represent the former right brain style of cultural organization, genocide becomes acceptable to the perpetrator because other religions always represent an insult to one's own God. The protracted conflict between Ireland and England is partly due to the lingering right brain religious orientation of that Gaelic culture and the rational-violent left brain fixation in England. The IRA "sacrifice" of lives in protest also may reflect the non-rational, religious right brain. In right brain societies conflict is more apt to take place with an outgroup (the otherhood) than within the group (the brotherhood).

The rise and fall of Communism is more easily understood with the help of the right brain-left brain dichotomy. The longing for the intimacy and security of the cohesive and right brain-dominated brotherhood never completely dies out. Communism was based on this premise: people could share things in common and render mutual support for all. This is a powerful method of social organization, especially where right brain functions have been allowed to persist such as in Oriental societies. The problem historically with right brain-dominated societies is that social control is largely impossible when the size of the group exceeds certain limits. The group tends to break down into factions and produce separate brotherhoods warring with one another. The support for the members of a brotherhood is matched in intensity by the violence directed toward outgroups of members of the otherhoods. Once again, the extremes of cohesion and conflict touch. Bosnia comes into better focus now.

The first and only reference to the "extremes touch" phrase in the psychoanalytic literature that I have found is a footnote in an essay in Volume 3 of Heinz Kohut's *The Search for the Self*. Kohut's European background probably provided him with this concept and, likewise, more familiarity with right brain functions. In the essay written in the early 1970s and titled "On Courage," he discusses the nuclear self and how different heroic individuals attain something akin to wisdom when they take

a stand for what they believe in, even, and especially, if it results in their death.

I suspect this proclivity of the mind — especially the non-rational, non-linear, unconscious right brain — to combine or interchange opposites happens on the socio-cultural level as well. For example, opposites “nest” together or “touch” in the combination of Buddhism or innocence with militarism or violence. When a large group in a society abrogates the right to violence, other groups seem impelled to increase their violence. It seems to be reflected in societies where one gender is passive and the other aggressive. It may also be that democracy only works when most people are willing to express their violence by going to the polls to “vote the rascals out.” This is not to suggest cause and effect relationships, but rather a “nesting” proclivity. If individuals do not combine opposites within themselves, it will occur on a social level.

The concept of the extremes touching may have been more prevalent in the American vocabulary prior to the scientific-industrial revolution as reflected in the following quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson written in the 19th Century: “Extremes meet, and there is no better example than the haughtiness of humility.” I suspect that the advent of the scientific-industrial revolution with its emphasis on left brain dominance subsequently submerged such right brain thinking in the United States. But it is not completely absent in American culture today. At the conclusion of the movie, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the protagonist ages more and more until finally life starts over again with a human embryo. Ideas of reincarnation grow readily from this interpretation of extremes touching.

Playing with the opposites, this form of thinking, is not for the timid. The dominance of the left side of the brain is still a recent accomplishment in the development of human culture, communication, and thinking. There is a traitorous aspect to reviving the subjugated right side of the mind. Poets and other artists are still largely suspect in our world. Two quotes from psychotherapist and author Michael Eigen will “rest my case.” First, a “one-liner” from process notes of a successful treatment: “It feels funny to feel two opposite things at the same time: security and insecurity.” In a more philosophical

vein, Eigen writes: “[Our wish to live forever] gains its full meaning in tension with an acute sense of mortality. In general, an idealizing feeling and the violence of life go hand and hand.”

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## A Jungian Response to “The Extremes Touch”

**Diane Perlman**

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In “The Extremes Touch,” Ted L. Cox thoughtfully explores the phenomenon of the paradoxical nature of opposites as manifested in brain function, psychology, history, religion, culture, and literature. Jungian theory extends the idea of “this proclivity of the mind ... to combine or interchange opposites” to a profound archetypal reality — an archetypal dialectical pattern. This “proclivity of mind” points to a deeper vision of the structure and function of the human psyche with intimations of aspects of our design and perhaps our purpose. We live our lives in a tension between opposites and all development takes place along a gradient of dynamic energy generated by opposing forces.

We begin life emerging from the primal Self which contains all of the opposites and all of the possibilities for our development. In the course of life and adaptation to the relational and physical world, we carve out an ego identity, which emerges from this Self. Jung said, “The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to the subject” (CW 11, para. 391). The ego is consciously identified with one side of a pair of opposites, while the rejected,

ignored, undeveloped, or punished side of the pair — whether of the “bad me” shadow or the “good me” bright shadow — is assigned to the realm of the unconscious. The greater the trauma or neglect, the greater the dissociation of that which is rejected from consciousness; the greater the projection; and the greater the dread, hate, and fear of those qualities and those people or groups who represent these disowned qualities. Neurosis can be thought of as a one-sided conscious attitude. In an essay written after World War II, Jung said that in hysteria the opposites are farthest apart, referring to the fury of Nazi Germany.

In an optimal facilitating environment, the opposites are well developed. They can then be successfully integrated. The capacity to integrate is a psychological achievement and sign of health not reached by most people. In suboptimal development, we see a dread of integration and a tendency, or rather a compulsion, to split. This explains why mature, courageous proponents of integration of the opposites [such as Robert Kennedy and Yitzhak Rabin] often get assassinated, and why fundamentalists are committed to the destruction of peace processes. We often see progressive leaps forward followed by the emergence of the more primitive, regressive elements in the psyche. It takes a strong, courageous ego to become conscious of the unconscious, to withstand the pull to regress, and to pay attention to these elements and find a way to integrate them, thereby expanding ego consciousness and moving towards wholeness.

Three possible scenarios can apply to history, culture, and gender: 1) the opposites are undifferentiated, 2) the opposites are pathologically split, one-sided, far apart, and projected, which renders integration impossible and attempts at integration are dreaded and destroyed, and 3) in an optimal environment, the opposites are differentiated and well developed, and integration of the opposites is encouraged and supported.

Cox states that “American and other English-speaking cultures in general inhibit right brain activity. Romance-language, Gaelic, and Oriental cultures preserve a larger share of consciousness for the right side of the brain.” If integration represents a higher level of

consciousness, then the one-sidedness of cultures is neurotic, a form of arrested or lopsided development. Cox cites Freud’s reference to ancient languages in which one word contains opposites. This most likely reflects the early, undifferentiated state which contains all of the opposites. Here the extremes touch because they have not yet been differentiated, developed, purified, and consolidated so that they can touch on a mature level. Perhaps some elements in primitive, ancient, or right-brained cultures are undifferentiated, and in some respects contain fluid opposites.

In the left-brained Western cultures, the opposites are highly differentiated. This suggests a one-sided, patriarchal, militaristically conscious attitude, which, Cox says, “in general inhibits right brain activity.” In this culture, the opposite is relegated to the unconscious, including much of which is thought of and defined as “the feminine.” In the extremes of culture, including the religious right and fundamentalists, these aspects are dissociated, split off, and projected. In more developed cultures, perhaps the Romance-language cultures, there is some higher development which allows and promotes more integration of opposites. The extent to which there are splits between the masculine and feminine within and between males and females without and the extent to which there is inner and outer integration of the sexes are indications of the development of culture.

Jungian Analyst John Giannini claims that in Western culture the dominant personality type is extraverted, sensing, thinking, and judging. The typological counterculture, in the shadow of the dominant culture, is introverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving. In one-sided cultures, people can be socialized to develop in ways that are not congruent with their natural type, which is a form of violence done to the psyche which must result in symptoms, individually and collectively.

When Cox says, “When a large group in a society abrogates the right to violence, other groups seem impelled to increase their violence” and “where one gender is passive and the other aggressive,” he is giving examples of the splitting of opposites. When human qualities such as nurturing, tenderness, vulnerability,

power, rationality, strength, eros, and logos become mistakenly gendered, members of each sex are unnaturally reinforced for identifying with one side of the split and disidentifying with the other. As this becomes more extreme there is an increase in dread, fear, and hate of the punished, rejected, and disowned qualities which are projected onto and carried by the other sex (and the other race, children, and animals as well). What is killed off on the outside tells us what has been killed off on the inside. Violence and terrorism, among other things, can be understood as manifestations of projective identification, Melanie Klein's concept describing the evacuation of intolerable psychic contents which are deposited in an "other." One then engages with those denied aspects of the self through the other, individually and collectively.

The undeniable demand for integration is part of our design. Either we meet our fate willingly, or we are dragged to it kicking and screaming. One of my favorite concepts from Jung is that the work of consciousness is a work against nature, an *opus contra naturum*. The work of integration is a deliberate, conscious endeavor against the pull towards regression and splitting. The psyche provides every opportunity for us to meet this challenge. Although we are designed to reach wholeness, it is by no means a given. It is a matter of consciousness, a work against nature.

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## Death Wish, Watch Function, and Our Security Mania

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Neither I nor my teachers in psychoanalytic training were ever fans of the idea of a universal death wish. When you turn to Freud's writings you discover he overwhelmingly focuses on death wishes against

fathers, mothers, uncles, sisters and other specific individuals. I decided long ago that I would have to turn elsewhere to explain why suicide is so much more prevalent than homicide in our society and why we are obsessed with bad news and danger. Mass media news programs have 20 negative, violent items for every happy news item; and now there has been a proliferation of news sources on cable television with others rushing to emulate CNN's great success with a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week news format. All of this news gives us things to worry about while it also reassures us that we are alive and well in our homes, unlike the people in the news. Numerous additional elements are involved including voyeurism and the pleasure one feels at the displeasure of others, what the Germans call *Schadenfreude*.

News Coverage of the TWA Flight 800 crash on July 17, 1996, off Long Island serves as a good example of the focus on danger, tragedy, and bad news. Reputable news organizations, such as National Public Radio's Lehrer News Hour, even abandoned their scheduled news and devoted their entire program to the tragedy. The night before, radio coverage of the New York Yankees baseball game was interrupted by Curtis Sliwah and the ABC news staff who gave news coverage to speculations and the eye witness accounts of people who saw very little. For those of you who do not know the name Curtis Sliwah, he is head of the Guardian Angels (a New York City subway vigilante group) and a talk radio personality who fabricated attacks on himself to increase his ratings. The real issue is, why do we, the listening, reading and viewing public, focus so on these tragedies? Clearly, there are many reasons (for example, we could have been on the plane), but I will focus on one that helps to explain this behavior over time.

For tens of millions of years our human and primate ancestors needed to know about danger and to work together in order to survive. Food and shelter came after the needs of survival in the face of common dangers, which no one individual could overcome alone. For example, individually we humans cannot see behind ourselves. To survive, our ancestors had to be vigilant, to keep watch: I call this the "watch function." Despite our much-talked-about individualism, we still look to each other in

times of crisis. Television and other means of mass communication have created what Marshall McLuhan called the "global village." Crisis restores our sense of community in a world of *anomie*.

As I learned over 20 years ago from one of my teachers of psychoanalysis, disruptions always take precedent over the official program because that is what our emotions are focused upon. Terrorists rely on this process to disrupt our peace of mind and no amount of security will stop their inroads into that peace. To reassure ourselves, as well as for protection, we now have car alarms, computer passwords, doormen, an enormous number of keys, metal detectors, police, a record number of young men in jails, security guards and security systems. Though the crime rate, especially in the New York area, has been going down for a number of years, the security industry is booming. These days it is not uncommon to see people frantic because they are excluded by the forgetting of passwords or the loss of keys and ID (identification) cards. Status in some organizations is determined by the level of security clearance. At a minimum, these systems create an enormous inconvenience.

Before proceeding, I want to clearly state that there *are* lots of real dangers in this world which we must guard against; my focus here is on how we process them and allocate our psychic and physical resources.

At my college, located across from a horse farm in a beautiful and relatively safe environment, I start my day at 7:30 A.M. waiting for a security guard to view me on the video monitor and to "buzz me in" to a parking area. Next, I wait for a security guard to let me in to a computer room (with only one old computer!). Soon thereafter, I discover I am locked out of using the office computer because I don't know the secretary's newly installed password. Then I am barred from photocopying a quiz because the electronic key to the copying machine is locked up. To get on the Internet I must provide one password, to get my voice mail messages I need another password, and to access student records I need two separate passwords! My office, filled with valuable books and a number of items worth stealing, is on a busy corridor. Yet the campus is so safe that for 25 years, whenever I am on campus, I have left my office door

unlocked without ever missing an item. Lest the reader credit the safety of my office for 25 years to the security measures I am lamenting, I want to note that most of these are very recent innovations. Their introduction leaves me feeling more intruded upon than safer.

As much as "security" is reassuring, it also costs an enormous amount of time and inconvenience. When we empower gatekeepers (doormen, police, secretaries, security guards, and others), we risk being shut out or, at the minimum, kept waiting. On occasion, we discover that the gatekeepers act more like our masters than our servants. For example, when I have worked on Sundays a particular security guard has been offended by my very presence since at times of low activity he gets the feeling that he "owns" the place. I understand the feeling because I remember having it, though not expressing it, when I was a night security guard while working my way through graduate school.

Ramapo College is strapped for money partly because the State of New Jersey spends about three or four times as much on jails as on higher education. When the college was conceived in the late 1960s, the State spent approximately the same amount on advanced education as on jails. The tragedy is that every dollar spent on a jail helps make it more likely that a troubled young man will learn how to become a professional criminal and be incarcerated for the next 20-30 years. On the other hand, every dollar spent on higher education makes it more likely that young men and women will be productive taxpaying citizens. In my view, a reversal of the proportion of money spent on education and incarceration would improve our society. A valuable though small step in this direction is the college's mentoring program which takes young men off the streets of Newark and helps to educate them, starting in high school.

Though I am keenly aware of the dangers in our world and quite vigilant, I am concerned about the growth of industries sometimes based on unrealistic fears. I wonder how we can apply our psychohistorical knowledge to better understand these issues. I also keep in mind that there is only complete security in the grave.

*Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is a founding*

faculty member at Ramapo College of New Jersey which has made its reputation as a "public Ivy." Despite the greater sense of danger implicit in the emphasis on "security," Ramapo is known as a friendly place where students, working in close cooperation with faculty, can receive an excellent education. □

## Letters to the Editor

### Identifying With An Auschwitz Survivor

Dear Editor,

On my left arm I wear the Auschwitz number A-3317 as a tattoo. I was not there. I am neither a survivor of the camps nor am I Jewish. A-3317 belongs to Branko Lustig, Academy Award-winning co-producer with Stephen Spielberg of *Schindler's List*. Lustig, with astonishing generosity, allows me to wear his number from Auschwitz, though he said, "It is a sacrilege." I agree.

Why do I wear A-3317 tattooed on my flesh? Because no Jew was guilty. Because no Gentile was innocent. Because in a few short years there will be no more numbers tattooed on human arms to witness the reality of the Holocaust. Because we as a species must never forget who we are and what we did and what was done to us. Because we are all Jews. Because we are all Hitlers.

The Holocaust was a major cause of my leaving the Episcopal Priesthood. Our family have been Episcopal (Anglican) and Church of Ireland clergy for seven generations. My father was a Bishop. My oldest brother is a retired priest.

It happened this way. In 1965 I went to see a play called *The Deputy*. It had opened in Europe to great controversy, for it charged the Papacy with collusion in the destruction of European Jewry. The hero, a Franciscan monk as I remember, was eventually sent to Auschwitz and there one day exchanged places with one of those in the gas chamber line and was exterminated.

I was to last only two more years in my parish ministry before being fired, then leaving the ministry all together, and finally, in a fit of

righteous outrage, renouncing Holy Orders. Subsequent participation in Adult Children of Alcoholics and Co-Dependents Anonymous led me to the discovery that I had been molested by my mother and my eldest brother as a very young child. What, you ask, does that have to do with A-3317 tattooed to my arm? It has everything to do with tattoos, for as the Holocaust had started me on my journey out of patriarchal Christianity by confronting me with the energy of horrible and terrible events in the collective, so my incest realization confronted me with the energy of horrible and terrible events in the personal.

In confronting the unrepentant pedophilia of my eldest brother, a retired Episcopal priest, I encountered rage on my part of towering proportions and it felt good! It was this process which illuminated me regarding the depth and intensity of my feeling and the degree of rage and power that could be, even yearned to be, released if not restrained and integrated. A therapist of my brother, seeking to mollify my pursuit of him, asked me if I were aware of the Hitler within me and suggested I ease up. I wrote back that, yes, I was only too well-acquainted with the Hitler within.

Long before I ever heard of psychohistory, I had been introduced by my own experience into one of its basic tenets, that the psyche of the commentator is an essential part of the commentary. As it turned out, I now had in my own personal, emotional history two polarities which were working their bright magic on me. On one hand I had the collective polarity of the Holocaust, which had been a deeply emotional and career-changing factor. On the other, I had the individual polarity of my incest, with the added polarities of being a helpless victim as well as a potential killer — the possibilities occasionally switching between themselves with lightning-like rapidity. (That part did not feel good, I assure you.) While I did not emerge unscathed, I did emerge, as the New Testament's King James version notes, "clothed and in my right mind."

It was after this particular point in my process that I heard of a woman, perhaps in a novel, who took the concentration camp number of another woman. I remember thinking to myself, "of course." Later I read a psycho-

- All of which has not much to do with my view of myself and certainly of my work — while I worked for years on the Mills project, I did the Nixon book with my pinkie, so to speak, and I only did it in terms of limited existing, available materials.

TP: Which of your psychohistorical works are you the most proud?

BM: I am very proud of *James and John Stuart Mill* which, I think, is a major, major work. There are very, very few Mill scholars who have either sympathy for or any knowledge about psychoanalysis. Generally they are simply hostile toward it. They don't know that Freud translated some of [John Stuart] Mill's essays in the last volume of Mill's collected works in German.

- Time was when people believed in legends which told of a paradise. These were vague and confused dreams, the yearning of the soul of the oppressed Man after a better life.... a purer, more righteous life, and Man said: "There must be such a paradise, at least, in the 'other' world, an unknown and mysterious country.(87)

At last summer's International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) convention I was pleased to meet Dr. Charles Gouaux who gave a paper on "The Transformation of Oskar Schindler's List." I told him I had an interesting connection through Branko Lustig with the film, and showed him my arm and number. He was deeply moved, and we embraced, both with tears in our eyes. (96)

## Response to "The Unabomber"

**H. John Rogers, Attorney-at-Law  
Martinsville, West Virginia**

One sentence leaped out at me from Elovitz and O'Donnell's excellent "The Cry of a Child: The Unabomber Suspect's Explosive Family Boundaries" [in the September issue]. That sentence was about alleged Unabomber Ted Kaczynski's brother: "David, a social worker who believes in the Biblical injunction to be his brother's keeper, wonders if he will be indirectly

responsible for another death — his brother's...." The situation facing David Kaczynski is at least as old as that of Sophocles' *Antigone*: where does one's obligation to family end and obligation to the polity begin?

From his public statements, two factors weighed heavily on David's mind. First, he was repulsed by the possibility that the financial largesse he had given to his brother had financed, however unwittingly, Ted's criminal activities. Second, and far more germane, David feared that the Unabomber would kill again. (I have put aside two other *possibly* relevant facts from the public record: 1) David's wife, like Lady Macbeth, hectored him into taking action and 2) there was a sizable monetary reward posted which the family has not publicly renounced.)

The Kaczynski family seems to be possessed of solid middle class values. Middle class people view the police and prosecutors as their protectors and friends, which they usually are. An example of this thinking was present in my family when my nephew was in a one-car accident after a high school football game. He was intoxicated and the police found a handgun (his father's) under the front seat. My sister, an elementary school teacher, felt that her son should give the Deputy Sheriff a full statement because the boy "needed to learn a lesson." (It was my position that he should decline to make a statement and that any "lesson" here could be best taught by his parents.)

But, what should David have done? Clearly, at the beginning he was only operating on suspicion. Why not fly out to Montana, confront his brother Ted, and say, "I suspect A, B, and C, and I have reasons 1 to 8 inclusive. What do you have to say?" If Ted denies the allegations, David could say, "I have left a tape of what I just told you with a trusted friend and if anything happens to me, or if the Unabomber strikes again, that tape will be delivered to the U.S. Attorney's Office." If Ted admits the allegations, I, personally, would follow *Antigone's* course and put the welfare of my brother (by blood or affinity) before the welfare of the state, as it applies to past actions. Then I would deliver the above admonition with regard to possible future offenses. But, I am the first to concede that a valid case can be made for turning

the brother in. Again, where does one's obligation to family end and obligation to the polity begin?

I have the feeling that David Kaczynski will end up being a hero in everyone's eyes but his own. Regardless of the reasons behind his actions, he betrayed his brother and, like history's first surviving brother, he will bear *Lekayin ot* — "the mark of Cain."

*H. John Rogers is a graduate of Harvard Law School who has practiced in West Virginia and federal courts for over 25 years.*

### Paul Elovitz Responds

It is nice to be complimented on one's "excellent" article. Rogers is most gentle in his implied criticism that Michele O'Donnell and I missed the point in reference to the motivation of David Kaczynski and his wife, specifically to the temptation of the reward. To liken Ted Kaczynski's sister-in-law to "Lady Macbeth" seems both misguided and unfair to a beleaguered family. She (Linda Patrik) has reasons to feel distant from a brother-in-law who always treated her as an interloper, worried the family, and drained its resources.

David has been extremely devoted to a troubled, increasingly distant, and paranoid brother. He has had to relinquish his job as a social worker because of the needs of his brother's defense and the difficulty of living a normal life in the spotlight of the media. Since the Kaczynskis are a middle class family of modest means, if they should claim the reward for the Unabomber, I suspect the money will be used to defend Ted against the death penalty and to compensate for lost income.

I would second Rogers' assessment that "David Kaczynski will end up being a hero in everyone's eyes but his own." He cares deeply about his brother and was placed in a no-win situation by his realization that his "big brother" could have been bombing and killing people for 17 years. I would suggest that people focus on moral courage as a far more likely explanation of David's actions than greed. They might also monitor their own feelings and examine the variety of impulses that each of us normally has during a high profile trial. Psychohistory can

provide many insights into the group psychology surrounding the Kaczynskis' 15 minutes of fame and I hope some of our colleagues will write about this aspect. I would welcome the opportunity to publish such research findings. □

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